759 In these 2 qualifications of skill and success, some of the explicitly non-professional old ladies were recognized as easily matching the professionals. What then was the definition of a professional midwife?

759 789 What the professional midwives alone did was to deliver non-kin, for which they had to have magical formulae and reliable celestial knowledge. The incantations gave a midwife the right to be called a mɔ̄ tamyae, for he or she was using to a greater or lesser extent the sacred wisdom of occultism (saivasāt). Here midwifery was like any other craft or endeavor. One could cure, sing, and build a boat without magic, but with it, the chances of success and effectiveness were increased. The incantations could "ease delivery," "get a baby out that had died inside"(for this baby could no longer do his part), "prevent the poison of the fire from burning the mother," and give other special help. That this magic was the crucial difference between the professional and non-professional was illustrated by the old lady who had delivered 30 babies, but vehemently[67] denied being a midwife. "I am not a professional. I have no magic. I only pray to the Lord Buddha and think of sacred things each time."

759 787 A professional also had more detailed astrological knowledge of the orientations of relevant celestial beings so that delivery would be "helped and not obstructed." This knowledge was in no way a professional secret, but if complications during childbirth were evident, it was necessary to have accuracy, and convenient that the midwife had it.

759 562 212 191 778 To certain villagers the designation "professional" could not be applied to women because, never having been ordained, they had not learned to read, as men supposedly had, not only Thai but Pali and Cambodian, the languages of medical and magical lore. "A professional midwife has a book. No woman can become professional because she cannot read." The idea was that incantations were correct only if taken from the sacred texts at the temple, though in fact the formulae were taught orally. One male midwife had a sacred book in his private possession, which was proper, for

sacred books were inherited by males.

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67. Her vehemence may reflect either pride in being so successful without magic--a true liang dī--fear of being reported as unlicensed (see below, p. 145); or consternation lest she be accused of using magic to which she was not entitled.

by instruction from a ritually[71] approached teacher. "One cannot accidentally learn. One has to ask to be taught." As a practitioner in this field, the title "mɔ̄" signalized expertise; where teaching was involved, the title was khrū (teacher [McF. 183]) or ācān (professor [McF.990]). Speech was the key to this tradition, in spite of sacred books and wall-carvings in the temples.[72] Modern education, being book-and-teacher based, shared in this aura. There, even today, listening is more comfortable than reading.

Techniques of the practical, natural world were learned not by teaching but pragmatically by observation, example and experience. Eyes were the key. "I know because I saw," said a midwife. At the highest level of achievement in the natural world one was expert (nak), e.g. convict (nak thōt, an expert in being punished) a tourist (nak thīeo, an expert in roaming around).[73] Within the natural world, an intense pragmatism reigned always emphasizing visual phenomena. People were keenly

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71. To speak ritually one held in the hand the trio of incense, flowers, and a candle. This was the way to cross over from the profane to the sacred world, to inform (bɔ̄k) or make a request of, a sacred being (a teacher, priest, king, or deity). The tiny flame of the offering invoked holy fire, and so had the effect of making one's words compelling, for no one could gainsay a request under such circumstances. A husband about to deliver his wife held incense, flower, and candle in hand as he requested the help of ancestors and spirits. (Bishop Pallegoix saved the existence of his mission by thus approaching the King [Pallegoix, Vol. 2:201]). The trio of offerings, whether at the 4 corners of the lying-in fire-floor, or in "hat phlī krathong" at a "than khwan" rite, or even in an ordinary khwan khao made all actions and words compelling.

72. Because words, immaterial and invisable, lay at the base of occultism, words as continuous agents of power permeated Bang Chan's ordinary daily life. This was why words, verbal play, and punning initiated action: pregnant women attended the monks' "coming out of retreat" (ɔ̄k phansā) so that the child would "come out" (ɔ̄k) easily.

73. It should not be forgotten that most activities in the supernatural world had their technical sides, and the term "nak" was used there too. A curer had to learn his herbs; a dancer, his steps; and a master of ceremonies, the words of the chants.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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determined. So frequently the provocative, interesting, or delightfully human life histories found in the anthropological literature (Dyk 1938 and Tirabutana 1958 come immediately to mind) are so simply because they are the products of the more imaginative, articulate, and introspective members of the culture in question. The issue of course is not that a biography elicited from an articulate individual is to be considered ultimately any more or less valuable than one obtained from a more "typical" member of the culture—Kluckhohn's "Mr. Moustache" (1945) is ample evidence of what an articulate interpreter can do with the life history of a relatively inarticulate informant—but rather that it be accurately seen against a background of the psychological responses of the members of the community as a whole.[4]

The final stage of the research program is perhaps the most complex. Following the outlines of a recommendation originally made by Inkeles and Levinson (1954) and Inkeles (1959), it aims at presenting a systematic analysis of the *relationship* between the personality tendencies of the villagers, as determined through the foregoing materials on the one hand, and the functional requirements of Thai peasant society, as determined through ethnographic data, on the other.

An analysis of this type rests on at least three premises: (1) that there is just as likely to be a lack of congruence between the psychological capacities and proclivities of a group of people and the psychological demands that are made upon them by their own social institutions (demands that must be met if the institutions are to be maintained effectively) as there is likely to be a close fit, and that a crucial, empirical task of any culture-personality study is to detail the specific areas of congruence and noncongruence; (2) that human beings can bear considerable psychological strain—precisely how much we really do not know—and still function effectively, maintaining both their prevailing personality patterns and

Mandelbaum 1953, among others). The issue is the extent to which the psychological tendencies of life history informants—their readiness to respond and modes of response in various situations, their assumptions and unconscious premises—are typical of other villagers.

[4] I am reminded here of my own ambivalent reaction to a comment once made by a villager who, intrigued by the fact that I was collecting life histories, said: "I have heard about those people who are telling you their life stories. You're smart—getting interesting ones like them. Some of those people can really *phuud keŋ*." To *phuud keŋ* means to "speak well," but more particularly to speak cleverly, fluently, deceptively, convincingly, or beautifully (in an aesthetic sense). Actually, there were numerous individuals in Bang Chan who, in local terms, could speak considerably more *keŋ* than the life history informants. However, as the villager's remark suggests, the ability to be "keŋ-ful" in one's speech is something to which Bang Chaners give considerable attention, often to the extenf of seriously modifying the intellectual content of their speech, and is one more factor that must be dealt with in assessing the content of a biographical document.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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syntax is in our culture—and except for certain ritual occasions, perhaps in all cultures—one of the basic symptoms of psychopathy. Witness the "word salads" of hebephrenic schizophrenics and the "mental lapses" of aphasics. (See White 1948: 527; Brown 1958: 293; Goldstein 1948; and Jakobson 1957.)

On occasion some of our Bang Chan informants would ignore syntactic considerations and use the sentence cues as triggering devices for their own unanchored thoughts and preoccupations: *"When I realize other people do not like me, I feel . . .* that's happened to me sometimes. When you see that other people don't like you, you should avoid them. The Lord Buddha says. . . ." And then the completion might develop into a brief lecture on morality. At other times, the cue would trigger off an autistic explosion: *"His most unattractive quality is . . .* don't have anything to do with him! He is a wicked person. I do not want to speak to him. He doesn't talk sense. One day while I was fishing, he came along and asked me to have intercourse with him. I cursed him!" (Other data on this informant indicate that she was referring to her estranged husband.) These types of "ungrammatical" responses seem to derive from the social aspects of the interviewing situation—the informant has a friendly listener with a willing ear and thus occasionally ignores the original definition of the SCT task to declaim on his favorite subject[2]—and also from the fact that in social discourse our Thai villagers seem to indulge more in, and have considerably greater tolerance for, autistic thought than do most Americans. That is, the villagers are more accustomed to making and hearing statements that have little apparent "objective" meaning (or in the language of psycholinguistics, "referential" meaning: Brown 1958: 315) but which are symptoms of inner states and preoccupations. The crucial point here is that a listener often does not know—or care—precisely what a speaker is talking about, but simply accepts the other person's utterances as expressions of inner, unknown concerns. Such expressions involve the leaping over of connective thought and syntactic constraints (as in the above example of the lecherous husband) or indifference to the logical currents of the discussion.[3]

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[2] Sometimes his discussions are simply expressions of phatic communion—the desire to indulge in chitchat for its own sake. (See Malinowski 1923: 315; and Hockett 1958: 585.)

[3] It should be remembered that speech is not only a device for carrying on social interaction but also a mechanism for articulating one's inner preoccupations, whether or not other people understand. It is this latter use (which, incidentally, is ontogenetically the more basic: Piaget 1932; and Langer 1942: 35) about which Bang Chaners seem particularly tolerant. In general, a speaker in Bang Chan is not held very responsible for what he says. One rarely hears in the village—except from prying anthropologists—such charges as "I do not know what you are talking about. Explain yourself." For one thing, such a query would not be particularly polite; and in the villagers' scheme of things, what a person says is really his own business, re-

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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These various considerations are mentioned simply to note that our Thai informants, like all human beings, occasionally do break through the syntactic constraints of their own language, a condition which is probably aggravated here by the necessity for the SCT testing situation to be a dialogue. Nonetheless, as will be seen in examining the actual SCT responses, these lapses occur relatively infrequently. That they do occur so rarely undoubtedly attests to the power of grammatical patterns to bind human thought processes. By and large our informants are like most people in that they are habituated to think and speak in complete sentences.

The unconscious incentive to complete a sentence and the relatively unpremediated nature of the completion both help to mitigate the potentially sensitive nature of the SCT "questions" and thus the tendency to resist answering them. However, the third and most important factor is our informants' familiarity with these sentences as declarative statements rather than as direct interrogations. All the items included in the SCT touch on experiences which although perhaps personally threatening, are quite commonplace. Certainly statements like "When I realize other people do not like me, I feel such and such," portray experiences which most informants have imagined if not actually encountered in daily life; they at least have certain expectations about how they would feel under such circumstances.

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gardless of how unclear or irrelevant it might sound to others. A related factor may be the sense of the untrustworthiness of other people's statements that Textor (1959) has described as characteristic of Bang Chan discourse. However, untrustworthiness immediately implies a serious interpretation of the speaker's intent, an assumption that his statement is perceived primarily in terms of its truth or falsehood. Although this interpretation is undoubtedly appropriate for many situations, the point here is that the villagers have a considerably broader awareness and appreciation of the various uses of language: much of what people say is also viewed as a verbalization of unexplained fantasy, an articulation of a personal compulsion, or in some contexts, simply as a form of play or "nonsense."

Interpretations of fantasy or "nonsense" always depend of course upon the semantic and structural conventions of a particular language. And a common source of error is the foreign researcher who mistakes his own inability to understand the native language, especially implied meanings and assumptions, for autistic thought. The problem then reduces itself not to whether the anthropologist understands the native speaker but to whether other members of the culture do, and the matter should be checked and settled by the researcher's native assistant or interpreter.

This type of problem arose on occasion in my experience, and although I can recall instances when at my prodding the assistant could tease out into culturally meaningful terms the logic underlying an informant's statement, I can also remember cases when the assistant would concede: "I don't understand him either. A lot of people are like that. They say anything that comes into their minds, even if it doesn't make sense." From the assistant's Thai point of view, however, the latter state of affairs was quite normal and expectable.

It is this easy tolerance for the inexplicable in social discourse—or alternatively, a basic respect for the privacy of another person's thoughts—that seems to distinguish the Thai approach from our own, although we appear to share their attitude in our reaction to the autisms of children.